

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: August 20, 2004

Contact: Sherri Johnson
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES DROP IN UNEMPLOYMENT; JOB GAINS
Unemployment Rate Lowest In Three Years; National Leader in Job Gains

ASHEVILLE – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that North Carolina's unemployment rate for July was 5.0 percent, the lowest level since April 2001. North Carolina gained 8,200 jobs in July, marking the seventh straight month of job increases. The state beats the national average of 5.5 percent unemployment and continues to outpace the national job growth rate.

"Our hard work is making a difference," said Easley. "This is why we rank among the top states in the nation in job creation this year. Our investment in a skilled workforce over the past three years is paying off.

"When other states cut investments in education, job training and economic development, North Carolina invested more. That is the reason we are outpacing the rest of the nation."

The Governor also noted the importance of state and county officials working together to change federal trade policies.

"We are beginning to overcome some of the harm caused by national trade policies," said Easley. "This is good news, but it does not mean that we can rest. We must work every single day to provide a job for every hard-working citizen that needs a job."

Earlier this week, Easley called on Washington to enact additional "China Safeguards" (limiting the surge in imports from China) to help slow the job loss caused by unfair trade policies. He also asked local elected officials to echo his request with letters of their own.

Gov. Easley made the announcement at the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' annual meeting in Asheville. He addressed the commissioners on topics today including the economy, budget discipline, business climate and education.

(Further detailed data can be found on the ESC website at www.ncesc.com).

####

Governor's Press Office
State Capitol, Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
(919) 733-5612 - Toll Free 1-800-662-7005
FAX (919) 733-5166